

Sihanouk's press terms

Deposed Cambodian demands recognition of his forces by Western papers in return for data on journalists

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Prince Norodom Sihanouk says he will no longer reply to inquiries about missing Western journalists—unless their publications recognize the existence of pro-Sihanouk forces in Cambodia.

The deposed ruler of Cambodia, in a called message from Peking to this correspondent, stated he would not respond "to those newspapers or journalists that have not recognized in their publications the existence of the National Liberation Army of People's Cambodia."

Prince Sihanouk added that the National United Front of Kampuchea (Cambodia) "assumes no responsibility for the missing reporters and other Westerners" unless they hold passes issued by the United Front valid for visiting "liberated zones."

This was a second new stipulation laid down by Prince Sihanouk. It was not explained where or how to obtain such passes, although presumably applications sent to the Prince in Peking would reach

their proper destination and receive consideration.

Response to letter

Prince Sihanouk's message was in reply to a short letter from this correspondent dated July 7, sending him a copy of a Monitor editorial dated June 20, but making no further inquiries about missing newsmen.

The Monitor editorial expressed appreciation for the release earlier in June of Miss Elizabeth Pond, the Monitor's Saigon correspondent. She was one of three American journalists captured early in May and released five weeks later.

The Prince, who now makes his headquarters in Peking, apparently used my letter and the editorial as an opportunity for announcing he would no longer reply to questions about the more than 20 newsmen still missing during the Cambodian campaign unless his own forces are publicly acknowledged in the Western press.

Text of message

The text of the Sihanouk message is as follows:

"I thank you for your letter of July 7.

"Do believe that if the other missing reporters have not yet been found and freed it is not due to the lack of goodwill on my part. Moreover, I draw the attention of the Western press to its lack of logic.

"On the one hand, it alleges that the Khmer National Liberation Army does not exist and that only the Vietnamese Communists are operating against Lon Nol and his imperialist masters in Cambodia while on the other hand this press always addresses itself to me with the demand that my Khmer supporters give back its reporters.

"From now on, I shall respond no more to those newspapers or journalists that have not recognized in their publications the existence of the National Liberation Army of People's Cambodia, and I also remind them that the National United Front of Kampuchea assumes no responsibility for the disappearance of those reporters and other Westerners who do not hold passes in good and due form issued by the National United Front of Kampuchea for visiting the liberated zones."